

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S MINISTERS,

and the

PEOPLE'S DUTY TO THEM.

BEING

THE SUBSTANCE

OF A

SERMON,

Breached at

Oldham, &c.

On the Death of

The Rev. THOMAS HANBY;

Who departed this Life at Nottingham, Dec. 29th, 1796,
in the 63d Year of his Age.

BY THOMAS TAYLOR, V. D. M.

FOR HE ENDURED, AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE,

Heb. xi. 27.

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INTRODUCTION.

Mr. HANBY being justly held in high estimation in this circuit, it would have been deemed a very great slight upon his memory, if I had not taken some public notice of his death. My knowledge of that good man, for near forty years, made me very willing to comply with the wishes of his numerous friends on the mournful occasion, without the least thought of printing the sermon, which was delivered in all the principal places in the circuit. But several circumstances concur to make the publication necessary. In this age of parties, even good Mr. Hanby did not escape censure; and therefore what I have said in his favour must speak for itself. But seeing Mr. Pawson had taken the same text, a thing unknown to me, until I had written every word of the sermon, and also had forestalled me in several respects, I was almost at a stand; but still, the reasons for my sermon appearing, were not removed. Though we differ a little in method, yet we harmonize in sentiment, both as to the doctrine in the text, and our valuable friend deceased. I shall commit this feeble attempt to the serious consideration of the pious and candid reader, and also to the blessing of divine providence.

Christ's Ministers, and the People's Duty.

HEB. xiii. 7.

“Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”

IN all collected, and well connected bodies, there are certain ranks and orders which are highly necessary for the welfare of the whole. It is so in kingdoms, in corporations, in military departments, yea in private families. Even in a well constructed machine there are certain wheels, and other parts, which are all useful in their place; but then it is necessary that every wheel keep its proper place; or it confuses the whole. Now this is the case with the church; it is God's machine, it is the Lord's family, and he has placed different orders therein; *he gave some Apostles; and some Prophets; and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* Now it was well that each of these officers knew their place and kept it; otherwise great confusion must have ensued. Under the Law, a man was not to wear a woman's apparel, nor a woman that which belonged to a man. In a private family, if the wife will usurp the office of the husband, or the husband intrude into the place of the wife, or the child into that of the parent, what confusion must ensue? So likewise in the church, that glorious

A 2 machine,

machine, it is necessary that every wheel be found in its place, or there must be great disorder. Hence it is that the Apostle asks, *Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers?* (a) No, there was no need of that; only let each know their place and keep it, and there will be no schism, no breach in the body, no stoppage in the machine. Now if God take away a wheel, or a minister, he can put another in its place, for he is the almighty workman: we may regret their removal; but if he assigns them a more honourable station, with him is the residue of the spirit, and he can raise up whom he pleases, to fill up their vacancy. He has lately removed a wheel from our machine, and we feel a loss, and the text points out the way for us to improve that loss; *Remember*, says it, *them that have the rule over you*. There must be rulers in the church, though not Lords over God's inheritance, and there is some respect and attention due to such; for the Apostle says, *Let the Elders who rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* (b) But it is time to enquire,

I. What sort of men ought they to be who have the rule in the church.

II. What is the duty of the church to them.

III. We may see how far matters will apply to the case in hand upon the present solemn occasion.

1. We are to enquire what sort of men ought to bear rule in the church of God. To find out their character at large, we must look into St. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus. *A Bishop*, a ruler

(a) 1 Cor. xii. 29. (b) 1 Tim. v. 17.

must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt, or proper to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous. — Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the temptation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them that are without; lest he fall into reproach, and so reproach his work, and fall into the snare of the devil. (a) Now much might be said in commenting and enlarging upon the above qualities; but I choose rather to fix upon one idea, wherein the Apostle sums up the character of a ruler in the church, and that is, *Man of God*. But the man of God must flee those things, spoken against in the preceding verses; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness. (b) The term *Man of God*, is expressive, and given to several of the prophets, and is surely befitting a minister of God.

First, A man of God is one that is born of God; born of the spirit, begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; and is born of incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth for ever. He is translated out of the kingdom of darkness unto the kingdom of God's dear Son. He is in Christ Jesus, and is a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things are become new. No one can be a man of God unless he is a child of God; and how can he be a child of God who is not born of God? the apostle acknowledges his natural state, wherein he was a blasphemer, and an injurious person; but he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with

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(a) 1 Tim. iii. 2—1

(b) Chap. vii. 11.

faith and love which is in Jesus Christ. (a) I do not see how they can preach experience, that is, repentance, faith and love to God and man, who are strangers to these qualities themselves. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and therefore can be no proper ruler in his church.

2d. The *Man of God* is one that is taught of God; or otherwise all other teaching will avail very little. The apostle was well versed in school learning, and excelled many of his equals in age and rank of life; but still he was not taught of God; no, he was ignorant of the true God, and an enemy to him, and a persecutor of his saints, until it *pleased God to reveal his Son in him*; and then, sensible of his ignorance, he cried out, *Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?* However, this divine teaching does not supercede our own endeavours after useful knowledge. Timothy, though taught of God, is nevertheless exhorted to give attention to reading, meditation; and to study to shew himself approved of God, a workman that need not be ashamed; to stir up the gift of God that was in him. Even the Apostle himself made use of helps, or why did he desire Timothy to bring him the books which he left with Carpus? (b) But still, let a man be ever so well acquainted with books, or human learning, he must be instructed from on high, or he will make a poor ruler in God's house; he will often blunder, and hence it is that he has need to be much in prayer, that his heavenly instructor may direct him. I think Luther has a saying to this effect, that prayer, meditation and temptation, make a gospel minister; we may say, they are very neces-

(a) 1 Tim. i. 13. 14.

(b) 2 Tim. xi. 13.

fary ingredients in his composition, and he is not likely to do well without them; yet still it is necessary to seek in all things the wisdom which cometh from above.

3d. *A man of God* is called of God to his sacred office. *No man* to ought *take this* office of being a minister of the gospel *upon himself*, but *he that is called of God*, as Aaron was called to be the high-priest. In this respect the apostle thanked God, in that he fitted him for his work, and counted him worthy, putting him into the ministry. (a) Observe, it was God that qualified him for his work, and called him to his office. This honour he highly esteemed, and as he exclaims with wonder, *To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.* (b) If we run without being sent, yea, sent by Jehovah himself, we are certainly intruders, and shall not profit the people; and the Lord of the vineyard may justly demand, *Who hath required this at your hands?* "The hand of a bishop, or a presbyter, or a conference, can only admit us to act in their respective societies, and will avail exceeding little, unless we have the hand of the Lord upon us." It is well known, that every candidate for orders in the established church professes, "To be moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him that office and ministry." So that it is no new doctrine, but was known to our venerable reformers. Whether their sons know, or care any thing about it, is a matter which their own consciences must look into.

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(a) 1 Tim. i. 12.

(b) Eph. iii. 8.

However, such is the doctrine of the bible, and also that of the church of England.

4th. *The man of God*, is fully and freely engaged in the service of God. On one hand it is a pleasant and an honourable service, seeing it is the highest service under the heavens, namely, that of bringing souls to Jesus Christ. But on the other hand, it wears a different aspect in the sight of man. To be deemed as the filth of the world, and off-scouring of all things, is no pleasing circumstance; yet this will be the case with such as are fully engaged in the service of God. God's ministers are called to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and their warfare will last as long as their service lasts. Hence it is, that they must put on the whole armour of God, that they may stand in the evil day, the day of trial and persecution. Let any one read the lives of the first preachers of the gospel, also that of the reformers, and even some of the narratives of the first preachers in our connexion, for proof of this; nor did our deceased brother escape, as will be observed by and by. Christ's ministers are called *labourers*, and are said to labour in the word and doctrine. Indeed it is a labour of the head, and a labour of the heart; a labour of the body, and a labour of the mind; a labour that has cost me many a night's sleep. They have not to labour only with wicked and unreasonable men, avowedly as such, but even professors will make their way very rough and turbulent: Many of these will be crooked and perverse; headstrong and untractable; so that it is not easy to tell what to do with them. Such will create no small trouble to the faithful ministers of Christ, and will make their hands hang down, and dis-

courage them in their labour. However, their work is with the Lord, and their labour is with their God, and he will stand by them in every trying hour.

5th. The *man of God* is an imitator of God, one who treads in the steps of his divine master; and his language is, *Be ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ*. Like an eastern shepherd, he must go before his flock, and shew them the way by walking in it himself. A faithful minister must not be like a finger-post, merely pointing the way; but like a careful guide who walks with, or goes before the traveller. Our Lord observes, that the true shepherd *calleth his sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they knew his voice.* (a) I remember it to have been said of a pulpit orator, that when he was in the pulpit, it was a pity he should have been out of it, and when he was out of it, it was a pity he should ever go into it again. Such a one is certainly a most despicable character, and is likely to be among those who in the great day may say, LORD, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and done many wonderful works? when the LORD will profess, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity. The minister will be called to imitate his LORD, in humility, in meekness and gentleness, in patience, and long suffering, and in child-like simplicity. However, in many cases he must be steady; but his steadiness must still be in meek calmness; so that he may say, *ye are witnesses, and God is a witness also, how holily, and*

which has gained to A 5

(a) John x. 3, 4.

justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe. (a) We cannot reprove others for the sins which we live in ourselves. Thou that preachest a man should not steal, or be covetous, live in luxury, in anger or malice, or is vain, or trifling; art thou living in any of these things? How great must be thy condemnation, when the Lord will say, *Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee, thou wicked servant!* But, O thou man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.

6th. The *Man of God*, is one whose work the Lord approves of, and therefore gives success to his labour. Indeed no labour can be successful without the divine blessing; for even Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but it is God who must give the increase. Our blessed Lord very justly says, *Without me ye can do nothing*; but then he has promised *to be with* his own sent servants *always, even to the end of the world*. He certainly has not called his servants into his vineyard to tantalize and mock them; no, he will make them useful in some department or another. But, as in the erecting a stately palace, there are workmen of various descriptions employed; some in the roughest parts of the building, and others in the more elegant departments. All are not diggers of stone, makers of brick, treaders of mortar, or sawers of timber; neither are all carvers or gilders; but every man may be excellent or useful in his proper work. In the primitive church, all were not apostles, all were not prophets, all did not work miracles; nay, that burning and shin-

ing light, John the Baptist, wrought no miracles; yet all contributed to the building the house of the living God. The talent of some lies in awakening, and they are therefore sons of thunder; the gift of others may be adapted to comfort mourners; and therefore are sons of consolation. Some have a talent of dissecting the human heart, and discovering the lurking evils; others may point out the devices of Satan; others can open the scriptures in a very easy and profitable manner; while others can lead the believer into farther depths of the divine life. Hence we see the utility of the itinerent plan, in that every congregation has the advantage of the various gifts which the head of the church has bestowed upon his numerous servants; all to the feeding his flock, the edifying his body the church. This shall lead me to the

II. Thing proposed, that is to consider, what is the duty of the church to such as have the rule over them. Our Apostle says, *Remember them.*

1st. Remember the authority they have; they do not act in their own name; but in the name of him who sent them, and who says to them, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.* There is also a meaning in what he says in another place, *whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* (a) It may be abused, and prostituted to sinister purposes by popish priests or others, and there is nothing but what wicked men may abuse; yet it has an awful meaning, and therefore does not stand as a mere cypher in the book of God. We may say of the faithful minister of Christ, as the Apostle says of the civil magis-

(a) Mat. xviii. 18

trate, *He beareth not the sword in vain ; he is a minister of God for good to thee, if thou do that which is good.*

2d. Remember the respect that is due to them, which you cannot be ignorant of, if you duly attend to the oracles of God. What says the apostle on that head? *We beseech you brethren to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake.* (a) And in the chapter from whence the text is taken, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch over your Souls, as they that must give an account that they may do it with joy, and not with grief : for that is unprofitable for you.* (b) I doubt this is a circumstance that is overlooked ; and that many are led by the caprice of their own prejudice, for or against the man, without considering whose servant he is, or what the word of God requires in that case : Nay, the word of God commands something more than bare respect in profession ; it requires proof, by administering to their necessities ; *Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things ; for the labourer is worthy of his hire.* They who minister at the altar partake of the things of the altar ; even so hath God ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. For if they minister to you spiritual things, is it any great thing if they share a little of your carnal things? Perhaps under God, you owe more to them on that very account than you are aware of. Remember, *God blessed the house of Obededom for the sake of the ark.* If a person is teaching us a language, an art or a science, we deem them worthy of respect ;

(a) 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

(b) Ver. 17.

yea, I may say honour; and how much more to such as are the instruments of our Salvation.

3d. Remember, the great truths which they have delivered unto you from time to time, that you do not let them slip. The Apostle admonishes the Corinthians to keep in memory what he had preached to them unless their believing was in vain. Where much is given, much undoubtedly is required; so that there is great need to take heed that it may never be our condemnation that we have the light of the world; and that we should love darkness rather than light, while our deeds are evil. God's servants are like the wise householder, who bringeth out of his treasure things new and old; therefore the various kinds of advice which we have received respecting our different states, stations, and circumstances in life, should be treasured up in our hearts; so that all may have a suitable influence over our life and conversation. Even their well-timed reproofs should not be forgotten, seeing they may be under the disagreeable necessity of reproving, sometimes for wrong tempers, or wrong conduct, or sluggishness, or wrong principles; in all which cases it may be highly necessary to reprove sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. Even Peter, at a certain time, was to be blamed, and therefore, Paul withstood him to the face; and for any thing we know, Peter took it well; for we do not find that he resented it. It may be needful to remember the reviving cordials of divine consolation, which God's servants have ministered unto us from time to time in our different distresses, either of body or mind, and which may be a means of lifting up our drooping heads, or confirming our feeble knees. There is no

consolation like that which comes from the word of God; the promises are like the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations.

4th. We should remember the servants of God upon our knees. The Apostle makes this request in several places even for himself, that utterance might be given him, so that he might speak as he ought. To the Thessalonians, he says, *Brethren, pray for us*; an expression, which I seldom either read, or repeat, without an abasing sense of myself. When I consider the quality of the Apostle; his pedigree, education, natural, and acquired abilities; his extensive and successful labours; his great sufferings; he could shew the marks of stripes and scourges, which he calls *the marks of the Lord Jesus*: yea, I contemplate his high communion with God; yet this tall cedar bows his reverend head to the poor Thessalonians, and says, *Brethren, pray for us*: I am abased in the dust, and see and feel much need of the prayers of the children of God in the behalf of myself, and other feeble reeds which God uses in our day. He requests they would pray that they might be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men. Perhaps there would be no impropriety in our hearers doing the same, for certainly we have very unreasonable men to deal with, and such as would trample us under their feet. In the chapter from whence the text is taken, he repeats the request, *Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, willing to live honestly*. Let this advice be attended to, and especially if you see any weakness in your ministers. There, at the throne of grace, you may speak freely, and safely, it will not be

told again, and therefore can hurt no one. Telling my weakness to this man, or that woman, can be of no service, either to them or me; it may hurt them; but telling, or laying them before the Lord, will hurt no one, and may be of service to me; because our God hears prayer, and can answer to our mutual comfort.

5th. We are to follow their faith; that is, the great truths which they deliver. Great stress is laid upon this every where. A certain woman once heard our LORD with rapture, and exclaimed, *Blessed is the womb which bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked*; but he replied, *yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it*. The Jews had the gospel preached to them in types and figures, and more especially by the Prophets; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it; and therefore they did not profit by it. The Apostle James has a fine comparifon: *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls. If any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his face in a glass, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whose looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* (a) Thus follow the faith of God's servants; that is, to experience and practise that which they are enforcing upon us; so that we may be thoroughly changed both in heart and life, to the honour and glory of God.

6th. We are to consider the end of their conversation. Their conversation may refer to their own walk

(a) Jam. i. 22, 23, 24, 25.

and conduct. *Be ye followers of me*, said Paul, *as I am of Christ.* (a) And again, *Be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.* (b) The Apostle lays great stress upon the practical part of religion, both in himself and others. And indeed it is the only proof which we can give to either God or man, that we are truly changed. Moreover, the end of the true minister's conversation is to point to *Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Poor mortals are changeable; but Jesus is the same, the same in counsel, and in might. Besides, let men be ever so excellent, they must go the way of all the earth; even Paul must *depart hence* to his blessed Lord, and Peter must *put off his tabernacle*; but Jesus can say, *I am he that was dead, but behold I am alive, and live for evermore.* From hence we see who the true messengers of the Lord Jesus are; men born of God, taught of God, called of God, into his service, imitators of him, and such as he owns and blesses; and likewise we see our calling, and duty to such, in what manner we are to conduct ourselves towards them.

III. I shall now endeavour to apply matters to the present awful occasion, and see how they will suit the character of our much esteemed brother, lately gone to his eternal rest.

This venerable man was born in the city of Carlisle, in December 1733; but his parents dying while he was very young, he was brought up by a relation in the town of Barnard Castle. He says, he had serious impressions upon his mind at a very early period, especially in thinking on the day of judgment: But, as he says, "These

(a) 1 Cor. xi. 1.

(b) Phil. iii. 17.

impressions wore off, and I began to be rough in my manners, and untamed in my mind."

The truth was brought to Barnard Castle by a poor man, a native of that town, and who had lived some time at Leeds in Yorkshire, where he found the pearl of great price. Being returned to Barnard Castle, he spake of what God had done for his soul to his acquaintance, which had good effect. He and a few more met in an upper chamber for fear of the mob, where they read, sung hymns and prayed. Young Hanby with others found them out; and as his companions were disposed to mock, he joined with them in so doing: but his conscience reproved him; and the next night he went by himself and desired to be admitted among them, and found himself sweetly drawn to seek an unknown God. The minister began to take notice of this infant society, and assured a relation of Mr. Hanby's, that they were all wrong; and set up a meeting of his own, in opposition to the Methodists, in which he was to teach them a rational religion; through the persuasion of his relation, the youth joined this rational society of formalists, who could play at cards, and take their pleasures; but it continued not long, before it quite dwindled away; and he and his relation joined the little persecuted company, who began to have a preacher now and then to come among them, and who met with very rough treatment. However, he found his desires increase, and he longed for the day star to rise in his benighted mind; and while he was at prayer by himself, the Lord set his soul at liberty.

He then wished to see Newcastle, that he might find more ample instruction; and

Accordingly he went, and stayed there some months, attending preaching night and morning, and other means which were of great use to him. Returning to Barnard Castle, he stayed a while there, informing them of the excellent sermons, which he had heard, the nature of their discipline, and of the christian spirit which he had seen at Newcastle, all of which had profited and confirmed his soul very much. Thus was he born of God.

Hearing of the work of God at Leeds, he resolved to take a trip thither for a while, and then return, and settle at home for life. Accordingly he went thither, and very providentially got lodging at the house of a local preacher, where he met with kind and christian usage, and his time passed sweetly on, walking in the light of God's countenance; having little care upon his mind, but the law of the Lord was his delight, and in which he meditated day and night.

But now a new scene opened unto him; the burden of the Lord came upon him; and he believed he had a call to preach the gospel. The first impression he treated as a temptation; his ignorance, want of experience; his youth, and the rough treatment which he saw the preachers met with at Barnard Castle, all stood as objections before him. His soul fell into great darkness, which he compared to that in Gen. xv. 12. which fell upon Abraham; and he was in great bitterness of soul, not saying any thing to any one; but pouring out his distressed soul unto the Lord, he felt a willingness to comply, if he were sure it was the will of God.

He heard of a pious woman that was dying, and was exceeding happy; and he felt a great

desire to see one die in that sweet frame. He then made it his request to God, that if it was his will he should preach, that he would shew it to this dying saint; and as a preacher was going to visit her, he followed. Being a stranger to her, and every body beside, he stood in a corner of the room while the preacher was speaking to the dying woman; and when it was over, and he going away, or was gone, he was told that she enquired for the young man who stood in the corner; he returned, and went to her bedside; she then looked earnestly at him, and said God hath called you to preach his gospel: you have long rejected the call, but he will make you go; obey the call, obey the call. She put such an emphasis upon "he'll make you," as almost terrified him. He now resolved, by the help of God, to make trial. Thus was he called of God.

He opened his commission in a village called *Bramley*, in the neighbourhood of Leeds. In his way thither, he was variously exercised; not thinking much what he should speak from, believing, that if he was called, God would point out something for him to speak from; and if he was confounded before the people, it would be a less cross than that of being a preacher of the gospel. He took for a text, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." The people trembled for him, but at the same time prayed heartily for him; and the Lord visited them with his presence, and set two souls at liberty. Thus God approved of his work and owned his labour.

He continued sometimes preaching occasionally, and supplying for the preachers in different parts till the year 1754, when he set out for Staf

ardshire; and thus commenced his itinerant career. He endured much persecution during that year in various places; and no small danger, especially at Burton-upon-Trent; but from those various perils the Lord delivered him. In 1755, he attended the conference at Leeds, and was taken into full connexion; one year at that time being thought sufficient for trial. He was appointed for Canterbury; but in his way spent some time in London, till winter drew on. He set out, and as his cash was small, he was under the necessity of riding through in one day, for he could not procure a night's lodging for himself and horse. Night came on before he reached Canterbury, and as he drew near, two soldiers seized him, and robbed him of his watch and eighteen-pence, all the money he had in the world. However, providence brought good out of this evil; for it being rumoured in the city, that the methodist preacher had been robbed by two soldiers, it brought many to hear, both soldiers and town's people, and numbers were converted, and joined the society.

He spent several years in various parts of England; and in 1762 he went into Scotland, where he was very useful, especially in Dundee, and he began the society there. The people of that town had been much surprised by a bright shining light on a particular spot of ground, which could not be accounted for. In that very spot, Mr. Hanby fixed his station for preaching, without any previous knowledge of that circumstance.

After spending three years, with much satisfaction to himself, and profit to the people, he returned to England, where he laboured in various parts with his usual acceptance. In 1785 it

was determined that the ordinances should be administered in Scotland, and Messrs. Hanby, Pawson, and J. Taylor, were ordained for that purpose. But Scotland did not agree with Mr. Hanby's health at this time; and it gave his constitution such a shake that he never entirely recovered his former state of health. However, he continued his labours with good acceptance in Nottingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Bolton, Oldham and Leeds circuits, in all which places his name is, and will be precious as long as those live who knew him. In 1794 he was called to the chair, to preside in the conference at Bristol.

With respect unto his last end we have the account of it in the April magazine for the present year: the substance of which is, that on Sunday December 25th, 1796, he preached in the morning at six, and again he began the service at ten and in the evening at six. He met several classes and after his laborious day, he complained of being poorly; and the next day he was much worse, owing, as is supposed, to some gall stones not passing, a disorder which he was subject to. All possible medical help was procured, but to no purpose. Seeing his affectionate partner in distress, he said, "God will be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow; I have left my all with him." Soon after; "What should I now do if I had my religion to seek." As he grew weaker, he was asked several times, if he found the Lord near him, he answered, "Yes." On Thursday evening being asked, how he was? he answered, "I am departing; but I have fought a good fight," and a little past eight o'clock he breathed out his last, aged 63, having

aboured in the ministry 43 years. Thus finished his excellent man his course with joy.

My first knowledge of Mr. Hanby was in 1760, ministered to a congregation of Independants at that time, and Mr. Whitfield came to preach in the town, which was Wakefield. As Mr. Whitfield might be said to be the first preacher which I ever heard, I had a high esteem for him. I went to hear him; Mr. Hanby was present also, an entire stranger to me; but I felt my mind much drawn to him; and as he was to preach the following Sunday, and the time not interfering with our service, I went to hear him; his text was 1 Tim. iii. 16. He really preached an excellent, evangelical discourse, such as I did not expect; and from that time I began to form an acquaintance among the Methodists, and soon after disengaged myself from the congregation which I served, and cast in my lot among the Methodists, and have been a poor wanderer ever since. The station I was then in might have led to more ease and honour; but I have reason to believe my present life has proved more useful, which is the true end of preaching the gospel. From hence it is easy to infer, that I must have had a close attachment to Mr. Hanby, and whose death I sincerely lament. In him his children have lost an affectionate father, his wife an indulgent husband, I a valuable friend, and the church a useful minister. But our loss is his gain.

There were many valuable qualities in Mr. Hanby: He had a good natural capacity, and was exceeding gentle in his disposition, which rendered him not quite so fit for a disciplinarian, as that requires sometimes a little exertion. There was great uniformity in him; no flights, nothing

light, or trifling; nothing whining or complaining, but much loving gravity. There was great modesty, seldom speaking of any great good done by him, as how many, or who, were convinced or converted under him; or how many flocked to hear him. No, he left the work to speak for itself. He was endowed with much well-tryed patience, and he had often occasion for the same. He had some domestic trials, in one period of his pilgrimage; and though he was one of the most inoffensive men living, yet he met with much unkind usage among some, who profess religion. He was a friend to liberty of conscience, and as he was solemnly ordained, and had promised upon his knees to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, he could not satisfy his conscience without doing these things where the people requested. He could not see but that the people in England stood in as much need of our assistance in that respect as the people of Scotland; hence, though remarkable for his mildness, he was inflexible and steady, where his conscience and the word of God were concerned.

Mr. Hanby was married three times. His first wife lived but a little while. His second bore him several children; three of whom she left very young. Circumstances called for some one to act as a mother to these. The department of a step-mother is very critical; and therefore required time, nor did he out-run providence, which in due time pointed out an help meet for him in every respect, and who has proved a source of domestic comfort to him, and by whom he has left three children; who, with their afflicted mother, are now left to bemoan their

heavy loss. May God be a father to his children, and a husband to his widow.

Thus has the amiable Thomas Hanby ended his days in peace! We shall soon follow. I confess it affects my mind not a little concerning this awful providence. May the numerous congregations, in which this good man has laboured, remember the solemn truths which they so often heard with much approbation from this eminent servant of God, so that though he be dead, he yet speaketh to them. Many of you, to whom I am now speaking, have often expressed your high regard for him; let that appear by following both his doctrine and example, as he followed Christ. There were several who endeavoured to make his way rough, and thereby obstructed his usefulness; I believe it would give you pain, very much pain, had you any thing of that sort upon your consciences; and I hope you never will have any cause for any such painful reflections. May you never indulge a thought, or give way to a word that will give you pain in future. No, may we all attend the footsteps of the flock, and feed our kids, all our rising good desires besides the shepherds tents (a). So that with the wise we may shine as the brightness of the firmament, and with those that have turned many to righteousness, for ever and ever (b).

(a) Song, i. 7.

(b) Dan. xii. 3.

FINIS.